

## CLAIMS

1. A method for controlling the volume output of a first device (22), said device being operable to communicate with a second device (16) over a network link, the method comprising the second device sending a message (42) to the first device which receives said message, accesses a stored policy (50) and adjusts said output in dependence on the stored policy.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the policy (50) contains criteria which includes the time of day to affect said adjustment.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the policy (50) contains criteria which includes the number of received messages in a predetermined time interval to affect said adjustment.
4. A method as claimed in claims 1,2 or 3, wherein the policy (50) contains criteria which includes a threshold against which the current output volume is compared to affect said adjustment.
5. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein following adjustment the output level is determined and included in an acknowledgement message (70) sent by the first device to the second device.
6. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the stored policy criteria are user definable.
7. A system for controlling the volume output of a first device (22,80), said device being operable to communicate with a second device (16,82) over a network link, the second device having communication means (16a) for sending a message to the first device, the first device comprising communication means (30) for receiving the message, and processing means

(34) for accessing a stored policy (38,50) and for controlling said output in dependence on the stored policy.

8. A system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said first and second  
5 device further comprise indicating means (28) for indicating to a user acknowledgement of transmitted and received messages.

9. A system as claimed in claim 7 or claim 8, wherein the  
communication means operate according to a selected one of ZigBee,  
10 Bluetooth or IEEE802.11 wireless radio protocols.

10. A system as claimed in claim 7 or claim 8, wherein the  
communication means operate according to a wired protocol.

15 11. A device (22,80) for use with the system of claims 7 to 10, said device comprising communication means (30) for receiving a message, means for accessing a stored policy (38,50) and processing means for controlling volume output in dependence on the stored policy.

20 12. Program code (35) on a carrier which when executed by processing means of a first device causes said first device to perform the method of any one of claims 1 to 6.